25X1
Approved For Release 2007/06/14 : CIA-RDP83M00914R002900130016-4

Page Denied

Approved For Release 2007/06/14 : CIA-RDP83M00914R002900130016-4

Approved For Release 2007/06/14 : CIA-RDP83M00914R002900130016-4

85-0459

17 February 1982

NOTE FOR: Chairman, Security Committee

FROM : [redacted] STAT
SA/DDCI

Attached is a copy of an article by Jack Anderson, with a question from the DDCI. It seems to me that SECOM is an appropriate place to research the answer to the DDCI's question: "Does DIRNSA plan to press Justice for action?" I gave an advance copy of this article in question to Mr. Paschal of SECOM on 17 February.

When you get the answer, I would appreciate some sort of response that can be shown to the DDCI straightway. If there is anything I can do to help you, please let me know.

[redacted] STAT

Attachment

cc: EO/D/ICS
EO/DDA

Distribution:
Orig - Addressee
1 - SA/DDCI
1 - ER

S-107

Approved For Release 2007/06/14 : CIA-RDP83M00914R002900130016-4

Approved For Release 2007/06/14 : CIA-RDP83M00914R002900130016-4

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE C 15

THE WASHINGTON POST
12 February 1982

JACK ANDERSON

Report on Raid On POW Camp Ruffles Admiral

The time comes when the public has a right to know the undisguised truth about past military operations. So I recently reported that the celebrated Son Tay raid, a 1970 commando assault on a North Vietnamese prisoner-of-war camp, was undertaken even though Pentagon brass knew the American POWs had been evacuated.

My account displeased retired admiral Thomas H. Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had authorized the misadventure. He dispatched an accusatory letter to editors, disputing my story.

As Moorer put it, he had never "participated in a combat operation risking the lives of our personnel for reasons of domestic politics." This was not exactly what I had reported. I wrote that the Pentagon went ahead with the rescue despite the embarrassing absence of anyone to rescue "to impress the North Vietnamese with their own vulnerability."

The North Vietnamese seemed duly impressed and treated American POWs with greater care thereafter. So all in all, considering that the only injury was a sprained ankle to the troops on the raid, it was a reasonable success. True, no one was rescued, but about 100 of the enemy were killed without a loss on our side.

But Moorer is a distinguished old salt who does not like his secrets bared or his judgments questioned. I had accused him of "serious misconduct," he grumped, on the word of some faceless source. The admiral flung down the gauntlet: Let me stand up like a man and produce the source "if there is such an individual."

This is an old ploy, often used by those who are stung by my reports. As the admiral knows, there are two kinds of sources: authorized sources who provide the official version of events and unauthorized sources who are willing to tell the real story. The unauthorized version is almost always more accurate than the official line.

Rarely, a source will come in from the shadows and risk official displeasure. In this case, not one but three sources have stepped forward. (I never rely on a single informant.)

One is retired general Donald D. Blackburn. Moorer knows "there is such an individual," because Blackburn was his special assistant for counterinsurgency. As the general put it, he was the "chief planner" of the raid.

Said Blackburn: "We knew they [the POWs] had been moved, but we didn't want to give up the demonstration of power." The ultimate purpose of the raid, he said, was to show the North Vietnamese how vulnerable they were.

Two other sources who have also agreed to be identified are Tom Bernard and Steven Ekovich. In the crucial months before the raid, they were members of the Air Force Security Services assigned to the 6990th Security Squadron at Torii, Okinawa.

Their top-secret task was to monitor Hanoi's communications, decode messages and analyze raw intelligence. Their unit, having been alerted to the upcoming rescue mission, kept close watch on the Son Tay area. They discovered heavy air traffic around the POW camp and confirmed more than a dozen flights of Ilyushin 18 transport planes in and out of an airstrip near the camp.

After piecing this information together with material from other clandestine sources, the 6990th sent an urgent message on the ultra-secret "DIRNSA" hotline to the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Md., for transmittal to then-Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird.

"The gist of the report, issued at least one week prior to the scheduled raid, was that there were no more American POWs left at Son Tay to be rescued," Bernard said.

Approved For Release 2007/06/14 : CIA-RDP83M00914R002900130016-4